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Pelham NEWS

Fighting chance

MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Julianne Miszk of Niagara Falls running in SOSSA Cross country meet at Fireman's Park in Niagara Falls. See story on Page 3.

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Mosquitoes test negative for Zika

DON FRASER
Postmedia Network

A mosquito species believed responsible for most human cases of Zika virus has been discovered in Windsor.

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit announced the earlier discovery of that Aedes aegypti species last Friday.

Aegypti is a species of international concern because it can also be a transmitter of yellow fever, dengue, West Nile, and chikungunya.

The discovery was made by a team that included the health unit, Public Health Ontario, Brock University and Entomogen Inc.

Those three aegypti mosquitoes — which also tested negative for Zika and West Nile Disease — are believed to be the first time found in Canada.

It happened during surveillance for Aedes albopictus, another invasive species discovered earlier this summer that area.

> **"We do not think that this poses any risk whatsoever to people in the Windsor health unit this year."**
> Fiona Hunter

In a media conference held at Brock last week, Fiona Hunter, professor of medical entomology at Brock's department of biological sciences, said while the location where the two species were found, cold winter temperatures most certainly will kill off aegyptiand probably also albopictus.

Story continues on Page 17

A 'heart of Pelham Cares' remembered

WAYNE CAMPBELL
Special to Postmedia Network

George Kowalski, Pelham's 2002 Citizen of the Year, was praised for his sense of humour and sense of dedication last Tuesday.

Kowalski, 93, who died Oct. 20, was remembered during a service at Bethany Christian Reformed Church.

The volunteer firefighter was a life member of the Fenwick Firefighters Association at Pelham Fire Station No. 2 with service from the 1950s.

After more than 30 years of active service, in retirement he became a regular at the association's monthly business meeting and various events.

Last Monday, firefighters honoured him with a formal ceremony during visitation at Lampman Funeral Home and last Tuesday a ceremony included a fire truck escort in the funeral procession to Hillside Cemetery.

For more than 25 years, George Kowalski and Harold Griffin picked up food donations at schools, homes and churches with Pelham Cares.

Even to his 90s, Kowalski helped students load donations into Griffin's van.

"They were the face and the heart of Pelham Cares," said past president Jane Gilmour about the pair, "especially when they wore Christmas hats through December."

For about the first decade of Pelham Cares, the Kowalski home on Foss Road doubled as the community agency's food bank and headquarters.

EDDIE CHAU STAFF PHOTO

George Kowalski.

Food was stored in a spare bedroom. The board met around the kitchen table, "and George made up the weekly food baskets," Gilmour said.

"George's wife Anne became the voice of Pelham Cares answering our phone calls."

The farm house at 662 Foss Rd. was the same one Kowalski was born and raised in. From it, he worked his farm.

The house gave Rev. Colin Vander Ploeg a theme for last Tuesday's service: "In my Father's house are many rooms..."

George Kolwalski brought joy and delivered hope, the pastor said.

A positive outlook, twinkling eyes and a sense of fun were among his qualities.

Long-time Pelham Cares president Gail Hilyer said "he always left you feeling good about yourself."

Kowalski's grandson, Kors Pater, toucbed on his grandfather's simple outlook on life, his love of one-liners, an appreciation of "red milk" and his deep interest in all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He gave what he had and was devoted in the service of his community, Pater said.

Mayor Dave Augustyn said "George was always smiling and looked for what was good in people."

In 2002, the Fonthill and District Kinsmen Club selected Kowalski as Pelham's Citizen of the Year.

He would attend the annual citizen ceremony to cheer on the next winner.

George Kowalski was predeceased by his wife Anne in 2000 and an infant granddaughter Rebecca in 1998.

He is survived by Anne Pater (Kors), Peter (Terry), Marilyn, and Joanne Boyce (Ken) as well as nine grandchildren and 14 great- grandchildren along with his brother Victor Kowalski (Isobel).

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LOCALNEWS

Rooting for Julianne

BERNIE PUCHALSKI
Postmedia Network

The Miszk family has adopted the slogan of a family friend who lost her husband to cancer.

'Cancer hates positivity' has become the rallying cry for Joe and Bernadette Miszk as their 18-year-old daughter, Julianne, battles bone cancer in her jaw.

"That's a mantra we are using and we are both trying to be as positive as possible. Julianne can be an inspiration to other people and other kids," Joe said. "She has always been that person thinking and doing things for others. Sometimes there's a bigger cause out there beyond us."

Continued on Page 16

MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Junior girls take off from the start at the SOSSA Cross Country meet held at Firemen's Park last Thursday morning.

Don't let the pain of shingles slow you down. Protect yourself with the free shingles vaccine.

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*Individuals born in 1945 are eligible to get vaccinated until December 31, 2016.

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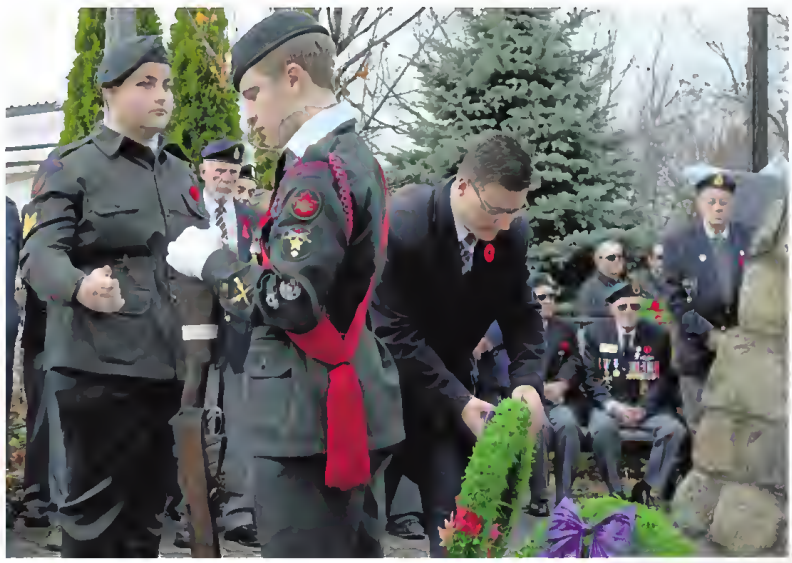
Take time to remember during November

DAVE AUGUSTYN

Each year in Pelham, the legion and cadets organize a number of very special ceremonies to commemorate Remembrance Day.

On the Sunday before Remembrance Day – this year on November 6 – the commemorations will begin at the Cenotaph at Centennial Park at 9 a.m. During this special service, veterans, members of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 613, the Ladies Auxiliary, the Royal Canadian Army Cadets, the Fenwick Volunteer Firefighters Association, the Fabulous Fenwick Lions, and federal, provincial, and municipal political representatives will march to the cenotaph and lay wreaths to remember those brave men and women who served (and who continue to serve) our country during times of war, conflict, and peace.

Then, at 10 a.m., the legion will organize another commemoration at Old Pelham Town Hall in Ridgeville. This will be the first Remembrance Day service with the newly restored First World War mortar. This service recalls those that served from the Ridgeville area and often also includes representatives of the Niagara Regional Police Service and several local veterans.



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Mayor Dave Augustyn lays a wreath in front of a monument during the Pelham Remembrance Day ceremony at Veterans Park at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 61 last year.

At 11 a.m., Rev. Russ Myers and the congregation of Fonthill Baptist will host a special church service. The ceremony usually includes reciting John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields," a scriptural reflection, and a video that highlights local veterans.

Later, at 12:30 p.m., the Legion will host a commemoration at the cenotaph at Peace Park in Fonthill. This service calls to mind those who served from the Fonthill area, and also includes the laying of wreaths by members of the Fonthill Volunteer Firefighters Association, the Fonthill Lions, the Fonthill Rotary Club, the Fonthill & District Kinsmen and some local businesses.

On Remembrance Day itself – this year on a Friday – the legion will host a complete service at Veteran's Park at the legion in Fonthill. The service begins at 10:45 a.m., so that the moment of silence can occur at 11 a.m. In recent years, and especially since the revitalization of the park, many people participate in this Remembrance Day service.

The freedoms that so many of us might take for granted – to express ourselves, to participate in cultural, religious, and political activities, to come and go as we please, to pursue a safe and happy life – are all due to the sacrifices of veterans and those who serve today. They sacrificed their futures so our future might be one of peace and happiness.

Let us each take a few moments to participate in these Remembrance Day ceremonies so we can be thankful and rededicate ourselves to peace. Lest we forget.

You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.

Mushrooms can prove poisonous for pets

RON MERGL

After a dry, hot summer, Niagara residents have finally been blessed with rain. It was surprising how fast the grass turned green again, especially so late in the year.

But this wet weather has also brought a rapid appearance of numerous mushrooms across lawns and under trees.

There are several hundred species of mushrooms in Ontario, but only a small percentage are considered toxic. Unfortunately, unless you are a mycologist (a person who spends their life studying fungus), it can be difficult to identify mushrooms properly, and toxic mushrooms can closely resemble non-toxic ones.

Dogs are attracted to mushrooms by their musty fish odour, and sometimes just due to their unusual shape or size that makes the mushroom look like something unique to play with. Cats, although more discriminating, will occasionally eat wild mushrooms, especially kittens, due to their curious nature.

The mushroom species we purchase for human consumption at grocery stores can be safely eaten by dogs and cats.

Poisonous mushrooms can cause severe clinical signs and even death in animals, so if you see your pet eat or "mouth" a mushroom, always assume it may be toxic and seek immediate veterinary care. Take whatever remains of the mushroom (if any) with you to show your veterinarian. Sometimes the common mushrooms can be identified by your veterinarian, but because it is so difficult to be certain, treatment is usually started for all mushroom encounters. The earlier the treatment is started, the better chance the pet has to survive.

Continued on Page 5

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A "death cap" mushroom.

Mushrooms can prove poisonous for pets

From Page 4

Often the mushroom encounter may not be seen, and the pet returns to the house after a romp outside with sudden signs of a problem. Symptoms that may point to mushroom poisoning can be as vague as vomiting and diarrhea, or more specific such as walking drunk, tremors, stupors, seizures or a coma-like state. However, sometimes symptoms may not occur until hours or days later, with the onset of liver or kidney failure. In these cases you may see increased thirst, black tarry stools, depression, and jaundice (the yellowing of the gums and whites of the eyes). Clinical signs are dependent on the type and amount of mushroom the pet bas eaten, and the amount of toxin absorbed. Smaller pets can be more severely affected.

Some of the most common and deadly toxins are the amanitin, muscarine and isoxazole toxins. Amanitins cause vomiting, drooling and diarrhea, leading to a semi-comatose state and then fatal liver or kidney damage. Sometimes it may appear that your pet has recovered after the initial gastrointestinal upset (vomiting or diarrhea), only to get very ill 12 to 24 hours later.

The muscarine toxins cause similar signs but also constricted pupils and severe depression with a very slow heart and respiration rate. The isoxazole toxins cause neurological problems with either severe excitability or depression.

"Magic" or "psychedelic mushrooms" do grow wild in Niagara, but are rare. These mushrooms contain a toxin called psilocybin which can cause hallucinations. Some years ago, a couple came into my veterinary hospital with their dog that was in a trance-like state. The dog was still mobile but moved very slowly and was stumbling. The owners had no idea what may have occurred for their dog to have suddenly developed this problem. When asked about the possibility of the dog eating any recreational drugs, the owners assured me that "their dog was not a druggy." Chuckling, I agreed with them readily, but persisted in my queries. Finally, it came out that they had just moved into a new apartment and the previous owners had left something behind in a plastic bag that looked like dried mushrooms. Could the dog have eaten that? Hmmm ...

Veterinary treatment of pets for wild mushroom ingestion includes immediately starting intravenous fluids and orally administering an absorbing product called activated charcoal. Activated charcoal will prevent any further absorption of the poison in the gastrointestinal tract, and allow it to be excreted out in the feces. Medications can be given to relieve the nausea, diarrhea and tremors or seizures, if any. If you present your pet before any signs of illness, your veterinarian may first give your pet something to make them vomit, with hopes of bringing up some or all of the ingested mushrooms.

Blood tests will be processed to determine the extent of organ damage. Your pet may have to be hospitalized for several days to recover from a mushroom toxicity. Prognosis is generally good if treatment starts early. But if the toxin causes too much internal damage in the liver or kidneys, the end result could be fatal.

Pets, particularly dogs, are very quick to eat things — often much faster than we can react. Prevention is a good idea. Check your lawn, garden and compost heap for mushrooms and remove them immediately (use gloves and wash carefully afterwards). When out walking your dog off-leash, try to stay close and observe if your pet attempts to eat anything. But don't let worry get the best of you — remember to enjoy our beautiful Ontario fall weather and outdoor time with your pet, before the extreme cold days keep us house-bound for days at a time.

Ron Mergl is a veterinarian with a practice in Niagara Falls.

Dr. Kimberly Dobson

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Fundraiser honours plane crash victim

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Rifat Tawfig spent his life giving back to others.

In bis death, tbe family and friends of the 25-year-old Niagara Falls man have come together to honour him by continuing that legacy.

Tawfig, an instructor with St. Catharines Flying Club, was one of three young men from Niagara who died in an Oct. 16 plane crash in mountainous northern Pennsylvania.

Also killed were students Ben Jeffries, 19, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Corey Mijac, 18, of St. Catharines.

The trio was returning from a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., with the St. Catharines Flying Club when the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration lost radio contact with the plane.

Wreckage of the aircraft, a small Piper PA-28 Cherokee, was discovered by search-and-rescue crews the following day.

After news of tbe tragedy broke, a GoFundMe campaign was created by one of Tawfig's close friends to see a well built in his name in Sudan, where his family is originally from.

In only two days, the online fundraiser received enough support to surpass its $10,000 goal.

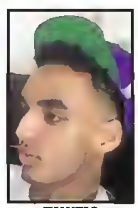
The target has since been increased to $15,000, which as of last Wednesday afternoon was only $150 shy of being achieved.

Ahmed Daoud, a longtime friend of Tawfig, said their families have been close since both moved to Canada from Sudan in the early 1990s.

He was always moved by Tawfig's willingness to help others and to do what he could to contribute to the close-knit Sudanese community.

"He was just a great guy. If anybody needed a ride, even if he was going the opposite way, be would take them," Daoud said. "He would never say no.

"He always put people ahead of himself."


TAWFIG

As a child, Tawfig had an unabashed love for planes.

"When he was younger, he always wanted to be a pilot," Daoud recalled.

It was through Daoud's father, a former pilot, that he got his first introduction to the world of flight.

He would often come asking for advice about potential paths to take that would lead to him becoming a commercial pilot for a large airline.

It was as a result of those discussions with Daoud's father that Tawfig pursued a position as a flight instructor with the St. Catharines Flying Club.

> "He was just a great guy. If anybody needed a ride, even if he was going the opposite way, he would take them. He would never say no.."
>
> Ahmed Daoud, a longtime friend of Tawfig

With about 400 flying hours under his belt, be hoped to accumulate enough time in the sky to achieve his dream of working for Saudi Arabian Airlines.

JEFFRIES

His parents, while originally from Sudan, are currently living in the Middle Eastern nation.

It was Tawfig's sense of adventure that Daoud believes drew him to aviation.

That dream didn't come without hesitancy from his parents, who had hoped he'd take a path similar to his father and pursue a career in medicine.

But those concerns were cast aside when they realized Tawfig was not only bappy, but also quite skilled at being behind an aircraft's controls.

Tawfig and his mother were extremely close, Daoud said.

"Every time he flies, be calls her."

The day of the crash was no exception.

MIJAC

When the aircraft made a routine fuel stop in Richmond, Va., Tawfig made sure to pick up the phone and dial his mother.

"He said, "Mom, just pray for me. There's some bad weather in the area. Pray for me that everything will be OK," Daoud said.

When his mother learned sometime later that Tawfig's plane had disappeared from radar, she immediately booked a flight to the U.S.

The crash is being investigated by the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board.

Daoud said the family, including Tawfig's parents and three sisters, has been "trying to hold up," but is understandably having a hard time coping with the loss.

"He was so close to his family. Everybody, they were proud of him. His dad was really proud of him."

The Sudanese community, members of the local mosque in St. Catharines and members of the flying club have been a strong source of support, he said.

Condolences, as well as donations, have poured into the GoFundMe page in Tawfig's name, created by close friend Mawia Janoudy.

On the website, Janoudy, who did not immediately respond to requests for comment, describes Tawfig as "one of the most patient and considerate people I have ever known."

He reminisced about experiences the pair had shared over the years, and about how they said their future children would someday play together.

"You died doing the job that you love," Janoudy wrote. "I'm proud to have grown alongside such a gentle and patient soul."

"Let us strive to be better people in Rifat's memory."

The money will be used to build a 45-metre deep well capable of supporting 1,000 families with water daily for the next 15 years. It will be built by Muslim Aid, a U.K.-based charity.

Funds exceeding the initial goal will be used to support other well projects in Ghana, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

To donate to the GoFundMe page, visit www.gofundme.com/rifattawfig-sadaqa.

A funeral service was held for Tawfig at the St. Catharines mosque on Geneva Street Wednesday, followed by a burial at the Islamic Cemetery on Yokom Road in Niagara Falls.

Services were also held last Wednesday for Jeffries and Mijac at George Darte Funeral Home in St. Catharines.

In a statement provided by Daoud, Tawfig's family extended gratitude to Niagara Regional Police, tbe Sudanese-Canadian community in Niagara, Sudanese Community Association of Ontario, Islamic Society of St. Catharines and the St. Catbarines Flying Club for their concern and support.

The family also "send out their deep condolences to the families of the other two young men," he said.

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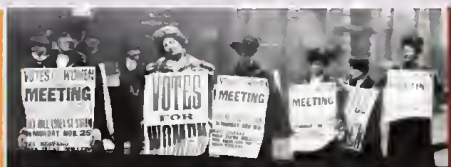

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Pelham Fire Services reminds residents to please change your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector batteries when turning back clocks on Sunday, November 6th for Daylight Savings Time. Learn more at **pelham.ca/smoke-alarms**.

Christmas in Pelham 2016

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Downtown Fonthill

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE
November 3 & 4 9am-6pm
November 5 9am-5pm
Downtown Ridgeville

FALL BAZZAR
November 4 1pm-4pm
November 5 9:30am-2pm
Fenwick United Church

'HOMES FOR THE HOLIDAY' HOUSE TOUR
November 12 10am-3pm
5 Locations in Fonthill

KRIS KRINGLE QUARTER AUCTION BAKE SALE & VENDORS
November 19 11am-4pm
Fonthill Legion

PELHAM FIRE STATION #1 TURKEY RAFFLE
November 25 7:30pm
177 Highway #20 West, Fonthill

LESSONS, CAROLS & COOKIES ADVENT SERVICE
November 30 2pm
Fonthill United Church

WREATHS OF WISDOM
November 30 7pm
Pelham Public Library (Fonthill)

TEMPERANCEVILLE HISTORIC DISPLAY
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Peace Park
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CHRISTMAS LIGHT COMPETITION
December 1 - January 1
Various Locations Throughout Town

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December 2 Afternoon

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177 Highway #20 West, Fonthill

OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS MARKET
December 2 4pm-10pm
Under the Fonthill Arches
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December 2 7:30pm
766 Welland Road, Fenwick

PELHAM COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE
December 3 9:00am-1pm
Throughout the Town

TURKEY RAFFLE & CHILI CHALLENGE
December 3 8pm
Fonthill Lions Hall

SENIORS' HOLIDAY TEA
December 7 2pm-3pm
Pelham Public Library (Fonthill)

HEROIC WALKING WITH SANTA
December 8 9am-10:30am
Peace Park

SANTA CLAUS PARADE & ACTIVITIES
December 10 1pm-5pm
Presented by Fenwick Lions Club

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MUSICAL
December 10 3pm-4pm
December 11 11am-12pm
Pelham Community Church

CHRISTMAS CENTREPIECE WORKSHOP
December 12 7-8:30pm
Pelham Public Library (Fonthill)

FONTHILL KINSMEN SENIORS' DINNER
December 13 6:30pm-8:30pm
Old Pelham Town Hall

CHRISTMAS CONCERT
December 17 2pm
Pelham Public Library (Fonthill)

CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE CONCERT
December 23 7:30pm
Pelham Community Church

Information is subject to change without prior notice. For the most up-to-date information visit **pelham.ca**

Remembrance Day Ceremonies

November 6th at cenotaphs in Fenwick 9:00am, Ridgeville 10:00 am, Fonthill 12:30pm
November 11th at Veteran's Park at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 613, 10:45am.

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- Wednesday, November 9th – Legion Services
- Wednesday, November 23rd – Get Connected With Your Town

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For more details, contact 905-892-2607 ext. 320 or visit pelham.ca/psac.

LOCALNEWS

Region to re-tender insurance contract

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region's insurance tender will be reissued after review of the procurement process by an independent fairness adviser.

Regional council hired a firm to review the tender for insurance and risk management services earlier this month after a substantive objection was filed by one of its bidders.

The completed report was presented to council in closed session last Thursday night.

Its content has not been disclosed publicly.

The firm hired to conduct the review, Purchasing Consultants International, was required to have the report finished before the end of the month, as the Region's existing insurance contract was to expire Nov. 1.

After nearly three hours of in-camera discussion, council approved extending its existing insurance contract on a month-to-month basis for up to three months.

Council will re-tender the Region's insurance contract and retain a fairness adviser to oversee the RFP process.

A fairness adviser will also be hired to oversee implementation of the recommendations of the report received last Thursday, including changes to the Region's procurement bylaw and training for staff as required.

Staff was directed to prepare a response to the fairness adviser's findings. That report will include "remediating measures," as well as a timeline for their implementation.

There was no discussion regarding the fairness adviser report in open session.

While the review process was underway, PCI's president and CEO Stephen Bauld told the Standard all documentation related to the procurement would be reviewed in addition to interviews being conducted with proponents, staff and anyone else involved with the contract award, including consultants.

Bauld said the process would be reviewed to determine whether the Municipal Act, as well as the Region's own purchasing policies, procedures and bylaws, were followed.

Questions that were raised regarding the insurance tender surrounded an addendum issued two weeks after the closing date and its handling, with submissions sent in by e-mail instead of in a secure manner.

Council has previously indicated that after the insurance issue has been dealt with, there's potential to again hire a fairness adviser to review the recent Humberstone landfill contract, which also received an objection from a bidder complaining about the procurement process.

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Dr Andrew Taylor passes 100,000 mark in procedures

Lasik ProVision is the Niagara Peninsula's only comprehensive refractive centre which deals with the treatment of common visual disorders. The centre was founded in its current location in 1999 and has evolved to a state of the art refractive centre with a global reputation for the laser correction of nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. It is a world leader in bringing the treatment of Zeiss Laser Blended Vision Vision for the treatment of presbyopic "reading glasses vision" to North America. In addition, the centre specializes in the treatment of cataracts and corneal disorders such as keratoconus.

Dr. Andrew Taylor

Founder and medical director, Dr. Andrew W. Taylor, is one of North America's leading ophthalmologists in the use of excimer lasers in refractive surgery. He obtained his medical degree from the University of Toronto in 1991 and went on to complete a specialty residency in ophthalmology, also at the University of Toronto. He then went on to complete subspecialty training in corneal and refractive disorders. He has completed over 100,000 refractive procedures including lasik, photorefractive keratectomy and cataract surgery to date. In addition to his directorship role at Lasik ProVision, Dr. Taylor is an active staff member of The Niagara Health System in the Department of Ophthalmology.

Lasik ProVision has evolved in its current location from its original incarnation as Lasik Vision, which brought affordable lasik eye surgery to North America. Dr. Taylor restructured Lasik Vision in 2001 as a founding principal and owner of Lasik MD, which then went on to expand refractive clinics across Canada. In 2005, Dr. Taylor left Lasik MD to focus on more customized patient eyecare. In addition to his base clinic in Niagara Falls, he underwent an international expansion to London, England, Brussels, Belgium and the United States. Currently, in addition to his work in Niagara Falls, Dr. Taylor is involved in the development of a comprehensive ophthalmic centre in Toronto.

"What is exciting now in refractive laser eye surgery is the safety of the procedure and the range of treatment options now available for patients. It is rare that a patient cannot benefit from refractive surgery" says Dr. Taylor. "The greatest development in recent years has been the use of the femtosecond laser for the creation of the flap upon which the lasik procedure is based. Not only does this create a thinner and more uniform flap which leads to better optical outcomes, it alleviates the need for a blade and cutting microkeratome which was for many patients the biggest hurdle preventing them from having refractive lasik surgery. The safety factor is so great, I no longer utilize the microkeratome blade in lasik eye surgery". Dr. Taylor has extensive experience on several laser platforms. "While we started with the Bausch and Lomb platform in 1999, the industry has moved forward to provide greater customization for the unique optical errors of each individual patient. At Lasik ProVision, we have the Wavelight Allegretto platform but we are increasingly shifting to the Zeiss Meditec MEL 80 platform with the Visumax femtosecond laser. "This platform in my belief delivers the optimal reshaping of the cornea to maintain the natural corneal shape for optimal optical correction and customization. Zeiss laser Blended Vision is unique in the treatment of presbyopia or "reading glasses vision". It is the only excimer laser platform that predictably increases the range of vision so patients can see at near, intermediate and far without the loss of stereovision. This is truly exciting. Previously, and on other laser platforms, we could only treat with monovision with one eye corrected for far and one eye corrected for distance. This left patients with a loss of intermediate vision and reduced stereoacuity. It worked, but Zeiss Laser Blended Vision works so much better."

What is the future of refractive surgery? "The future is continuing to refine the refractive outcome with ever safer and less invasive procedures. I am very excited that within the next year, we will begin to fully utilize the femtosecond laser's potential, going beyond the creation of better flaps to conducting the entire laser procedure within the cornea without a flap. This may sound like science fiction, but it is a reality and I am honoured that Zeiss has chosen to partner with Lasik ProVision in Niagara Falls to bring this technology to North America. To obtain additional information or to book your FREE consultation please contact our refractive counselors at 1-888-510-2020 or 905-371-3217 You may visit our website at www.lasikprovision.com

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Early detection still your best chance

ALISON LANGLEY
Postmedia Network

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian women, with one in nine expected to be diagnosed in their lifetime.

while early detection through mammography can result in increased treatment options and better survival rates, many women avoid getting the procedure.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and women are being encouraged to stay up-to-date with mammograms as part of their routine medical care.

"There are many reasons women are apprehensive about having a mammogram and I think one reason is they are afraid of something being found," Dr. Janice Giesbrecht, medical director of the oncology program at the Niagara Health System, said.

"What we tell people is it's far better to know if there is something and have it checked and find out it is nothing of concern than going on worrying."

Some women put off getting a mammogram out of fear the procedure will be uncomfortable or painful.

A mammogram is an X-ray of the breast and detects any changes that have occurred, even those too small for the average person to feel or see. During the procedure a plastic plate is slowly pressed down to flatten the breast and hold it in place for a few seconds.

Giesbrecht said by following a few simple steps women can decrease the level of worry and anxiety.

"We want to make it more comfortable for them to come in as opposed to a worry."

A growing trend is women who make appointments together and "make a date of it."

"Make it something you do together," Giesbrecht said. "Then plan dinner together or something like that afterward."

The same concept can apply to women from different cultural communities who are unfamiliar with the process.

"It can help if they come together as a group, or even ask if people from their church or cultural group can come with them so they can all support each other."

Bottom line, Niagara's top oncologist said, is "just book it."

There has been a dramatic decrease in breast cancer-related deaths in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom since the implementation of modern mammography in 1990.

"It's in part due to screening, but also to better treatments of breast cancer. The message is that even if you are diagnosed with breast cancer, you are likely to need less treatment and less surgery. Those are all good reasons to bave a mammogram."

Breast cancer does have one of the highest survival rates compared to other cancers, according to Cancer Care Ontario. And mammograms are one of the best and most reliable ways to detect breast cancer early on.

The Ontario Breast Screening Program offers free screening to women ages 50 to 74 with no signs of breast cancer. The program also screens women ages 30 to 69 years who are identified as being at high risk for breast cancer.

The NHS has three full-service OBSP centres and assessment clinics in Niagara Falls, Welland and St. Catharines. Satellite clinics are also available in Port Colborne and Fort Erie.

Women ages 50 to 74 can make an appointment at an OBSP site without a doctor's referral. For more information, call 905-378-4647 or visit www.niagarahealth.on.ca/en/breast-screening.

alangley@postmedia.com

MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and women are being encouraged to stay up-to-date with mammograms. Pictured above are Dr. Tom Li, radiologist, and Lisa Perrella, senior technologist, at the GNGH breast screening clinic.

TIPS INCLUDE

- Do not use deodorants, antiperspirants, body lotions, or talcum powders before the mammogram. Metals in these products can show up on the X-ray picture.
- Avoid wearing necklaces or long earrings, since metals can show up in the X-ray.
- Keep longer hair tied or pinned up so it's not in the way.
- Most women's breasts are tender the week before and after their period. Book your mammogram for a time when your breasts are not so tender.
- Some women take a mild pain relief pill, such as the kind you would take for a headache, one to two hours before the appointment. Only do this if it will not affect any other medicines or any health concerns you may have.
- Some experts suggest having less caffeine for two weeks before the appointment to help reduce tenderness.
- Watch video at hhsshare.ca/2016/10/mammogram-tips/

(Source: Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Regional Cancer Program and Hamilton Health Sciences)

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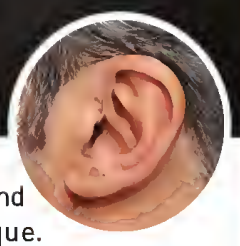

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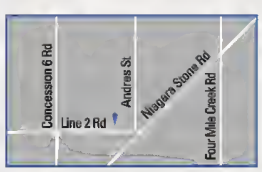

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LOCALNEWS

Police board sets budget behind closed doors

BILL SAWCHUK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The Niagara Police Services Board holds its first full meeting at the new headquarters building on Valley Way in Niagara Falls last Thursday.

BILL SAWCHUK
Postmedia Network

This much we know: tbe operating budget for the Niagara Regional Police is going up 2.15 per cent.

How the Police Services Board reached that number is a mystery.

The board approved its budget for 2017 at its monthly meeting last Thursday, but almost all the discussions took place behind closed doors in the preceding weeks.

That didn't sit well with board members Vaughn Stewart and Bob Marshall. Both voted against the budget on principle.

"In my experience on the board, every year we will have a tussle between the demands of effective and adequate policing and the cost, but I believe that discussion should take place in public," Stewart said. "This time the discussion did not take place publicly.

"I know you (chairman Bob Gale) have talked considerably about being a leader in the province in transparency, and I think the public should be aware which things were left in — and which things were left out — as far as planning our budget."

The operating budget is $137,259,204 for 2017. It is the largest single item on the tax bill Niagara Region sends its ratepayers.

Marshall asked Chief Jeff McGuire if he could advise the public if he had any concerns about what was removed from the budget to keep the increase at 2.15 per cent.

"I can't get into the issues because they took place in a directed, confidential meeting, but there were a number of things we brought forward that were removed," McGuire said.

McGuire wrote a letter last month to the board asking it to hold as much of the budget deliberations in public as possible. That request was turned down.

Sources have said the chief wanted what amounted to a four per cent increase. That number couldn't be confirmed.

The Region asked the police board to come in with a one per cent increase.

The unknown factor in the whole process is the collective bargaining agreement. Niagara's police officers have been working without a contract since Jan. 1.

The police board and the Niagara Region Police Association, the union that represents the rank-and-file officers, are in negotiations.

Board member David Barrick, who is also a Port Colborne regional councillor and chairman of the Region's budget committee, said he couldn't let the comments from Stewart and Marshall stand unchallenged.

"The budget meetings were confidential for a reason," Barrick said. "We are in a bargaining year. It's very difficult to have the discussions in public when we are still in negotiations.

"Any budget discussions have to take into account possible collective agreement increases. Maybe the provincial appointees, that are not elected, don't bave the taxpayer's and resident's interest at heart, but I, for one, do.

"That's why the budget discussions were in camera — because of the implications of bargaining."

McGuire said he never suggested the board discuss collective bargaining issues in public.

"There were a multitude of other issues that were not collective bargaining issues," he said. "Those issues are the ones we asked to be discussed in public."

Cliff Priest, president of the Niagara Region Police Association, said he didn't completely understand why the Police Service Board decided to hold its budget discussions in private.

"Obviously, there are some things in a police budget that have to be confidential, but I don't know why it would all be done in camera," he said when reached by phone after the meeting. "How they got to the numbers, I have no clue.

Stpry continued on Page 15

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Health care challenges discussed at chamber breakfast

ALLAN BENNER
postmedia network

While the Niagara Health System continues to invest government funding in hospital facilities, it's up to the communities to ensure the latest equipment is available within those facilities.

But that can be a challenge in communities where residents are concerned about plans that call for the closure of local hospitals, said Niagara Health System president Suzanne Johnston.

She was one of a panel of Niagara's health-care providers speaking at a breakfast event organized by Niagara's chambers of commerce last Tuesday looking at the future of health care in the region.

"How the beck are you going to raise funds in a place where nobody really believes in what you're doing?" she said, responding to a question from the audience.

"That is really going to be a challenge for us."

While Johnston said she isn't directly involved in fundraising efforts, she said she still has an important role to play helping the OneFoundation meet the equipment needs of local hospitals.

"It is our intent to be front and centre in our fundraising campaign ... and we will have a tough sell," she said.

However, she said as the community begins to understand the "vast array of services that will be available" if construction of a new hospital in Niagara Falls becomes a reality, "it is my belief that people will start to see, as we work together on that, that it is for the benefit of all."

Johnston was joined by NHS chief of staff Dr. Tom Stewart, Niagara Medical Officer of Health Dr. Valerie Jaeger, Niagara Emergency Medical Services chief Kevin Smith and Local Health Integrated Network chief executive officer Donna Cripps for the breakfast meeting called Health Care in Niagara held at Sparrow Lakes Golf Course in Welland.

Despite a perception that the majority of people are against plans to close hospitals in Welland, Port Colborne, and Fort Erie and replace them all with a new bospital in Niagara Falls, Stewart said "the data we're getting in is saying there's a huge upswing in terms of support of the direction of Niagara Health."

ALLAN BENNER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Niagara Health System Niagara Emergency Medical Services Chief Kevin Smith, from left, Niagara Medical Officer of Health Dr. Valerie Jaeger, Local Health Integrated Network chief executive officer Donna Cripps, Niagara Health System chief of staff Dr. Tom Stewart, and NHS president Suzanne Johnston were panelists during a breakfast meeting called Health Care in Niagara organized by Niagara's chambers of commerce.

"I think the majority understand that," he said. "And when people experience the change that has happened over the last several years, they do understand. They do see that their care is better and we're partnering to continue to make it better."

Fundraising was one of several topics discussed during the meeting that also included discussions about transportation challenges and emergency services.

Smith said Niagara paramedics provide care "of the highest quality in the province" while ensuring patients are transported to hospitals where they receive the care they need.

"If it takes a little more time to get to a site that is going to get you the necessary intervention right at the onset, that would be the first choice," Smith said.

Jaeger said paramedics provide "pre-hospital care" due to increased training that they receive.

"Certainly now when a patient gets to an emergency department after having been transported by one of Kevin's team, they already have had probably the first 20 minutes of intervention that would have been done in the emergency department if we dialed back 10 or 20 years ago," she said.

"That transport time to hospital is not wasted time."

Stewart said paramedic services are part of a "hospital without walls."

"It's very important that people think that just getting to a site with bricks and mortar is going to be an answer to a problem. It's not," he said, adding that patients also need to be transported to the most appropriate hospital for the treatment they need.

"I know of no research that has shown that getting to a centre than does low volume of care, for example a low number of hips or heart attacks or whatever it is, gives better care than getting to a centre that does higher volume of specialized care," he said.

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Police budgeting process to be more transparant

FROM PAGE 12

"They got it down to zero last year without taking into account any collective bargaining issues.

"Obviously, we will eventually get some sort of settlement that will impact that. Last year's zero increase was just a political hurrah that wasn't based in reality.

"If there is any increase from collective bargaining, they didn't allow for it in 2016. Unfortunately, that will have a knock-on effect. They could already be in a deficit for 2017 because of 2016."

Barrick said nothing was removed from this year's budget.

"(What the chief said) was inaccurate. Some things that were recommended were not added to the budget. Nothing was cut."

Barrick said once negotiations with the union conclude, the budgeting processes will be more transparent moving forward.

"The collective agreement will be public," he said. "The decision to hold the meetings in camera was the consensus of the board, even if some members disagree with it."

He also objected to the characterization of the budget process as secretive.

"All municipalities and police service boards have in-camera meetings on a regular basis," he said. "The previous board had in-camera meetings all the time — on everything. We have made all our committee meetings public."

Gale said the board checked the history of how it has handled previous budget deliberations.

"I look at it from a staffing level," Gale said. "We make a lot of decisions here that could involve our people, and we don't want to make comments in public about that, be it good or bad. As a chair, and as a board, you have to make some tough calls.

"There will always be people for and against them.

"If the chief doesn't like the way it went, he has avenues for appeal. That's not to challenge him. That's just the way the system works. The service will always want more, but from our standpoint we handled it fairly."

bsawchuk@postmedia.com

BY THE NUMBERS

Niagara Regional Police budget increases by percentage and year

2017 2.15 per cent

2016 0.00 per cent

2015 2.79 per cent

2014 3.64 per cent

2013 2.57 per cent

2012 3.93 per cent

2011 5.15 per cent

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LOCALNEWS

Friends, family impressed by teen runner's fight against cancer, disability

From Page 3

Bernadette shares that belief.

"She has a purpose on earth. Unfortunately, she has to go through this, and I told her that we would go through this together."

Julianne's journey took an inspirational turn last Thursday when she competed in the mixed para division at the Southern Ontario Secondary Schools Association's high school cross-country meet at Firemen's Park in Niagara Falls.

It was a three-kilometre run that seemed highly unlikely for the four-time Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations para cross-country champion and three-time OFSAA track and field champion last Friday — the day she completed her latest round of chemotherapy at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto.

"With this treatment, we thought there was no way she would be able to run because they gave her two drugs," Bernadette said.

"They told us that these were the drugs that were going to make her lose her hair and the ones that were going to make her sick."

To the family's surprise, Julianne not only didn't get sick, but her appetite came back and she went for a run last Sunday despite not having been outside the house for a month.

"All of a sudden, she's running and running," Bernadette said.

"She probably ran three and a half K (kilometres) that day and once she got the endurance, she was great."

Last Monday, Julianne took part in some hill training with Niagara Regional Athletics coach Sue Bartol and last Thursday found her competing at Firemen's Park.

Wearing bib No. 320 and a Saint Michael Catholic High School singlet, Julianne was greeted at the finish line by supporters chanting her name and holding signs reading 'You can do it,' 'Mind over matter' and 'Be strong.'

Someone presented her with a bouquet of flowers, and her parents quickly covered her with a blanket and exchanged her wet footwear for dry apparel.

It was mission accomplished for Julianne, who said earlier in the week she was running at the SOSSA championship for her friend and fellow para runner Andrew McIntyre, and her Saint Michael coach Vic Pietrangelo, who runs beside her and is her guide runner during races.

"My goal is to run fast, get a good time and make it to OFSAA," she said.

No one who knows Julianne would have bet against her finishing the race, despite her weakened condition from the chemotherapy treatments.

She has already overcome countless obstacles.

She was born with Dubowitz syndrome, an extremely rare condition that has only about 140 cases reported worldwide since being described in 1965. She has also had to deal with a learning disability, an uncommon bone disorder called fibrous dysplasia, surgeries and infections.

"As a parent you ask, why her?" Bernadette said.

"Give this poor kid a break. Running is all she has. Her sister went off to university, her friends have all gone, and this is her time. Everything was falling into place."

Bernadette knows Julianne is the only one of her children strong enough to overcome so many obstacles.

"Julianne has all her struggles ever since she was a baby and she overcomes it," she said. "Kids respect her. She gets into running and she's a champion."

Joe is amazed by his daughter's resiliency.

"Julianne has been through so much, and she's used to treatments and stuff like that. She rolls with it better than anyone I've ever seen," he said.

Julianne's oncologist encouraged the Miszks to let Julianne run, knowing how crucial it was to keeping her spirits up.

Being told she wouldn't be able to run hurt Julianne more than hearing she had cancer.

"It was harder telling her she couldn't run or do SOSSA and OFSAA," Bernadette said. "She started to cry, and it broke my heart. She told me that Andrew needed her and wouldn't go to NRA (Niagara Regional Athletics) or practices by himself."

In addition to more rounds of chemotherapy, Julianne will undergo surgery in December that will see a piece of her fibula, or calf bone, used to replace the cancerous part of the bone in her jaw.

"She wants to go for track and field and she has qualified for the provincials in Special Olympics in the 3K, 5K and 800" metres events, Bernadette said.

"I don't know if she can do it, but I can't tell her she can't. Look where she is now."

After last Thursday's race, Julianne is in a position to win her fifth straight OFSAA gold medal Nov. 5 in Port Hope. Whatever the result, it will be a labour of love.

"She loves to run for the sake of running," Bartol said.

Mixed with that love are many other attributes.

"She's very good because she is focused and she is driven. She's self-motivated, and you can't ask for anything better," she said.

Pietrangelo has been along for Julianne's amazing run of OFSAA championships, serving as her guide runner at all the provincial championships.

"She's fast, she's very committed to running, she trains hard and she wants to beat her best time every single time she races," he said.

"With that type of commitment, you can only get better."

Her parents have also been with her every step, acting as advocates to get the para runners more recognition at the OFSAA championships since the inception of the para division when Julianne was in Grade 9.

"Back then, they were only giving out participant ribbons and Joe and Bernadette very gently would let the conveners know in a nice way every year that these kids should be treated the same way as every other athlete," Pietrangelo said.

"Last year, they finally ended up getting medals."

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MIKE DIBATTISTA/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Julianne Miszk of Niagara Falls running in SOSSA Cross country meet at FiremanâÅôs Park in Niagara Falls.

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Mosquitoes in Ontario tested for possible diseases

From Page 2

Although albopictus, also known as the Asian tiger mosquito, can transmit viruses including Zika, it's not the species responsible for the majority of human cases of Zika.

"We do not think that this poses any risk whatsoever to people in the Windsor health unit this year," she said of the aegypti discovery earlier this month. "It's the end of the season, these aegypti will undoubtedly be killed off with the winter weather.

"We're not 100 per cent sure albopictus will be killed off, so we're working with Windsor health unit in the spring and will resume enhanced surveillance.

Hunter, who is also president of the entomological company Entomogen, said when albopictus was previously discovered in the Windsor area, a decision was made to do "enhanced surveillance" and that's when the aegypti, also known as Yellow Fever mosquito, were found.

It is believed the mosquitoes found may have been transported somehow to the Windsor area in small amounts of water contained in a vessel or artificial container, possibly in cargo.

"We expect the mode of entrance into Windsor (for both species) could have come in cargo or somebody's vehicle if they've brought home something from an area where they were present," Hunter said.

"We don't know if these are ... separate examples, and we are still looking to see if we can determine the source population."

"This is something of concern and we are keeping our eyes on it," she added.

The Zika virus is spread primarily by bites from infected mosquitoes.

Most people infected suffer a mild and temporary illness, at worst. But infection during pregnancy can causes severe brain-related birth defects.

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JULIE JOCSAK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

(left) Alessio Gasparotto, manager at Entomogen Inc., Dr. Fiona Hunter, prof. of medical entomology, department of biological sciences and Bryan Girodano, PhD candidate, centre for Biotechnology, Brock University, speak to the media.

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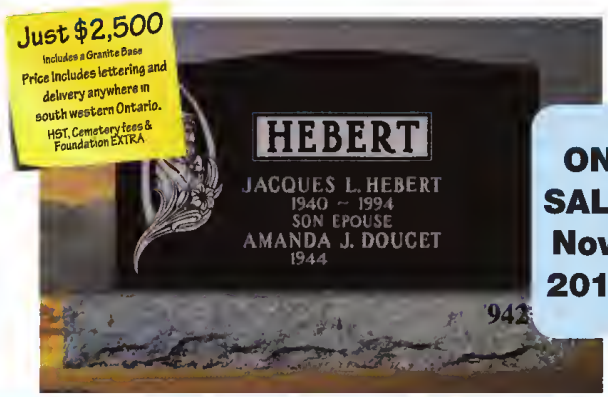

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